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Interview with Walter P. Haltigas

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Date: June 13, 1978

Interviewed by: Shirley Goldsmith and Betty Noff

A copy of the original letter was given to Mr. Haltigas who read it and indicated that he understood the contents.

Mr. Haltigas was given a copy of LIA #435-173-A which consists of a cover letter dated 11/12/63 from Robert M. Campbell to the Chief of SP and HE and to the Chief of Station in Paris forwarding a memo dated 11/25/63 which was written by Thomas B. Lasaria to Walter P. Haltigas concerning lasaria's prior interest in Lee Harvey Oswald. This document served as the basis for our questioning.

Haltigas stated that in 1963 he served as chief of the Soviet Section of the Paris station under diplomatic cover. He explained that Lasaria was also an officer in the Paris station but he served under [redacted] and worked out of the dome using alt-outs to make contact with others in the Paris station.

Due to the nature of the arrangement, Lasaria frequently wrote informal memos such as the one in #435-173-A which were then passed along to the station. These memos would then be forwarded to Headquarters, generally by Haltigas. In this particular instance, Campbell, who served under Haltigas, forwarded the letter to Headquarters because Haltigas was in the hospital at the time.

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Haltigas explained the following portions of Lasaria's memo:

- "REDWOOD" represents the Soviet Division.

- The "6 Branch" was the Operational Support and Research Branch for the Soviet Division. Its main function was the collection of

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information. Lasarsen was chief of the 6 Bureau until his transfer to Paris.

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- KULTUM was the cryptonym for the Office of Operations which is currently known as the DED. If the CIA wished to contact a returning defector, it would have made contact through this office. However, Heltigan stated that it probably was not standard operating procedure to interview returning defectors due to a variety of factors such as a lack of proper follow-up measures or the fact that these cases would have fallen into the jurisdiction of the FBI.

- ODACTD was the cryptonym for the State Department. Heltigan explained that it was not unusual that Lasarsen would have seen a State Department diplomat in Oswald as it would have been routine to receive most of State Department memos.

- Lasarsen's recollection of having discussed the Oswald case in Summer 1960 as stated in the memo, must have been a mistake. Instead, it probably ^{meant the summer} should have been of 1962.

- BI refers to biographic information.

- KDOVER was a cryptonym for a cover which was probably a business firm. KUDOVE was the cryptonym for the DDP. Heltigan explained in paragraph 3 ~~because did not mean~~ that he was phasing out of the DDP altogether. Instead, his reference to phasing ~~out of the DDP~~ referred only to the Headquarters assignment within DDP.

- NEOCAN was the legal traveller program whereby they (the DDP) gave ^{to persons} certain travelling to Soviet Bloc countries the required agreements which they reported back to the Agency upon their return.

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The AECLEAN/3 case was picked up in Europe for the Soviet Intelligence program went to the USSR where he fell in love with an American guide whom he married. He came out of the USSR in the summer of 1962 and his wife was permitted to join him some months later. Haltigas did not believe this to be a case where the couple were eventually divorced as this memo infers. Haltigas stated that it was unusual for Maria Oswald to be allowed to leave the Soviet Union as not many Soviet wives were permitted to leave during that time period.

- Haltigas was perplexed as to the reference to the "Harvey story" in the last line of the memo. He first stated that it must have been a typographical error which should have been the "Oswald story" instead. When it was pointed out that the sentence contained two other references to Oswald which makes it unlikely that this was merely a typographical error, he expressed confusion with respect to the reference. He could think of no explanation for this, nor did he remember ever speaking to Lasasir about this point.

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Haltigas recalled that he arrived in Paris for his assignment in June, 1962 and that Lasasir probably arrived here in September of the same year. Haltigas stated that he had never heard any rumors to the effect that Oswald had been used by the CIA at any time. He felt that because of his assignments within the Agency, he would have been in a position to know if Oswald had been used in any capacity. He mentioned that he had been in Japan from 1951-1955 and that Lasasir ~~had been~~ came there from

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1955 to 1958 & 1959.

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Since 1/58 ~~we~~ ^{the} program moved in SR/9 which was Special Operations within the Soviet Union. SR/9 was composed of 6 persons at this time. He explained that SR/10 was responsible for the Legal Travellers program which utilized U.S. citizens and that SR/2, 3, 4 & 5 ^{were} responsible for running foreigners in that program. Since Haltigan was generally apprised ^{by SR/10} of those persons who were travelling to the USSR under the program, he expressed the belief that it was almost impossible for them not to have known if Oswald had had some involvement with the Agency in this capacity.

Haltigan advised that SR/9 was responsible for maintaining its own records while they kept in the same manner as DDO files. If someone needed to know if a particular person was being used, they would be able to check it through the files. However, Agency association would not be directly reflected in a 201 file. Instead, there would be a paper in the file ^{referring} to another file in which operational information would be stored. Haltigan explained that a 201 file documents the person but not what the person is doing. A 201 file ^{might} contain a PRQ, Part I which is entirely biographical information, a security check and newspaper clippings concerning the individual. A case file, on the other hand, reflects the operational information. A case file would have a two part number such as 74-6, where the first number reflects the country or area of interest and the second number refers to the specific operation. In regard to the accessibility of case files, Haltigan stated that the area of primary interest is reflected on a 201 file opening sheet and that ^{St. Petersburg} go to that office to seek operational information.

When asked about the significance of CI/516 opening Oswald's 201

file. Haltigan REPRODUCTION
not know what CI/SEG usually say as we do.
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Haltigan was asked whether it was possible to purge an individual's file of any operational information by removing any reference cards in the 201 file and then removing the pertinent information from the case file. Haltigan stated that he does not know of the type of thing occurring in his experience. He stated that file maintenance was essential for the protection of the operator and stressed that SR/9 in particular was meticulous in its file maintenance.

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